Goals

The goal of this class is to familiarize students with the scientific method and the nature of research in social science and give them the opportunity to conduct their own research. This course will begin with a brief history of science, and the scientific method. It will then survey a variety of research methods that are used to accumulate and analyze evidence and data and develop hypotheses and conclusions regarding social phenomena and processes in the world. These methods will include survey research, participant-observation studies, ethnography, archival research, experimental studies, critical analysis, intervention analysis, meta-analysis, historical analysis, and other methods. During the course, students will study and apply these methods in a variety of exercises that are meant to improve their knowledge of research methods and their ability to write and communicate effectively.

Class Requirements

This class satisfies the requirements for a communication / writing class at the University of Utah. In this class the student will be expected to conduct research and utilize a variety of sources that include peer reviewed sociological journals and other published material that may include books, periodicals, magazines, and on-line media materials. The course will emphasize effective writing and speaking and use of available research materials and sources. It will entail writing five short papers and one longer final research paper that the student will summarize in a brief five-minute in-class presentation at the end of the semester. All papers will be double-spaced and in a readable size font. There will also be a midterm and a final exam. The questions on the exams will be true-false and multiple-choice questions.

The short papers will be turned in during the course of the semester, and the final paper will be turned in two weeks before the end of class. The short papers should be from two to three pages in length. For the first short paper, the student will select a research subject and review and summarize some of the existing literature and research on that subject. For the second paper the student
will engage in a participant observation study or ethnography wherein the student will study a particular group or engage in breaching experiment. In the breaching experiment the student will challenge what he or she thinks is an existing norm. If a student chooses this option, the student may not engage in any behavior that is illegal or considered immoral. For the third research paper, the student will conduct a short survey on a topic of his or her choice and analyze the results. For the fourth paper, the student will develop a simple experiment. The fifth short paper will be an outline of the student's proposed final paper. The final paper should be six to eight pages in length and may be based on any of the earlier short research papers or a new topic.

During the last two weeks of the semester, students will present brief five-minute summaries of their final papers in class, for which they will receive up to ten points. The students will present the research on panels organized in terms of the type and nature of their research topic. During the semester, the students will receive more information on the papers and throughout the semester they will receive feedback on the quality of their work.

**Grading**

The five short papers and paper presentation are worth 10 points each and a total of 60 points. The final research paper is worth 40 points. The midterm and final will be worth 50 points each, and each exam will contain five extra credit bonus point questions. The final exam will include questions regarding the content of student papers presented in class. Not including the possible 10 bonus points, there are 200 points possible for the class.

Students are advised to stay a week ahead on the readings and to ask questions and participate in class discussions. You may contact me by phone or email at any time, or you can stop by my office during office hours.

**Required Reading**

The Basics of Social Research, Fourth Edition, Earl Babbie,


**Students with Disabilities**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you need academic accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. With prior notification to the Center for Disability Services, all written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format.
Course Outline


Chapter One: Human Inquiry and Science
Paper #1, Research Review, Assigned.

Week Two (January 19): No Class

Chapter Two: Paradigms, The Nature of Theory


Chapter Three: The Ethics and Politics of Social Research
Paper #1 is due

Week Four (February 2): The Sociological Imagination, Ethics and Social Research.

Chapter Four: Research Design
Paper #2, Participant Observation, Ethnography or Breaching assigned

Week Five (February 9): Types of Research, Validity and Reliability, Correlation and Causation, Qualitative and Quantitative Research.

Chapter Five: Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement
Paper #2 due

Week Six (February 16): No Class

Chapter Six: Indexes, Scales, and Typologies

Week Seven (February 23): The Role of Probability and Sampling in Research.

Chapter Seven, The Logic of Sampling
Paper #3, Survey, Assigned

Week Eight (March 2): Midterm Review

ASA Writing Guide
Paper #3 is due
Week Nine (March 9): Midterm Review and Midterm #1 on Weeks One through Seven.

  Chapter Eight: Experiments
  Paper #4, Experiment, Assigned

Week Ten (March 16): Spring Break No Class

  Chapter Nine: Survey research

Week Eleven (March 23): Experimental Research and Survey Research.

  Chapter Ten: Qualitative Field Research
  Paper #4 is due

Week Twelve (March 30): Qualitative Field Research, Unobtrusive and Evaluative Research.

  Chapter Eleven: Unobtrusive research
  Chapter Twelve: Evaluation Research

Week Thirteen (April 6): Qualitative Data Analysis.

  Chapter 13: Qualitative Data Analysis
  Outline of Final Paper is due

Week Fourteen (April 13): Quantitative Data Analysis

  Chapter 14: Quantitative Data Analysis


  Final papers are due
  Paper Presentations


  Paper presentations
  Final Review

Week Seventeen Final Exam: Monday May 4th (6:00pm - 8:45pm)

  Papers returned
  Final exam